

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Division of Parole and Probation

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STATE OF MARYLAND

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MICHAEL S. STEELE LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ANN SAAR SECRETARY

MARY L. LIVERS, PH.D DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR OPERATIONS

JUDITH SACHWALD DIRECTOR

February 9, 2006

The Honorable James E. DeGrange, Sr. Chair, Senate Subcommittee on Public Safety, Transportation and the Environment Room 120, James Senate Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

RE: Division of Parole and Probation – Operating Budget Analysis

Dear Senator DeGrange:

This letter is in response to the budget analysis presented to your subcommittee by the Department of Legislative Services. Should the subcommittee have any other questions or concerns, the Division will be happy to explore those matters and provide you with additional information. The subcommittee's interest in and support for the Division's ongoing efforts to strengthen community supervision and to manage effectively are greatly appreciated.

The Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) operates 48 offices with at least one in every county to provide supervision/monitoring of approximately 40,000 offenders who are on probation for criminal offenses, 10,000 who have been released from prison on parole or mandatory supervision release, and Supervising/monitoring these 66,000 offenders is 16,000 drinking drivers. complicated by the fact that many offenders have multiple cases/sentences with various conditions, involving circuit and district court judges and the Maryland Parole Commission, as well as comparable authorities from other states. The 66.000 offenders currently being supervised or monitored represent approximately 112,907 cases.

Performance Analysis – Managing for Results

The department should be prepared to discuss its revenue forecasts in light of declining participation.

The most significant decline in the Drinking Driver Monitor Program (DDMP) population occurred between FY 2003 and FY 2004. Some of the decline may be the result of the method by which the workload figures were captured and reported. In FY 2003, DDMP was using a separate information system that did not produce a monthly workload summary. In July 2004, all DDMP cases were converted to OBSCIS II (Offender Based State Correctional Information System), DPP's primary offender information system, which resulted in a more uniform method of capturing workload data.

While the numbers have fluctuated slightly since then, any change appears to be attributable to the natural ebb and flow in offender populations. Since the revenue forecasts were prepared using FY 2005 data, the most significant decline in the population had already occurred. There were approximately 422 fewer active cases under DDMP supervision at the end of FY 2004 than there were in the beginning, but as of January, the number of active DDMP cases has actually risen by approximately 84 cases for FY 2006.

The Division does not control the number of cases assigned to this program; however, it appears that these variations would not significantly impact the revenue calculations. If fewer offenders are assigned to DDMP, any reduction in resources could be handled through good management.

The Division should be prepared to discuss what measures are taken to increase the percentage of participants who complete substance abuse treatment. The division should also address why the goals for increased participation are not more ambitious.

While the Division constantly strives to succeed in meeting its established goals, we have been prudent in projecting future performance given the myriad factors beyond our control that may impact our results. However, given our success at surpassing our target in the last two years, we agree with the legislative analyst that a more aggressive goal is warranted and will project a 2% minimum increase in our next Managing For Results submission.

Evidence has shown that compliance with special conditions is most successful when implementing a rich and comprehensive case plan. The Division's Proactive Community Supervision (PCS) strategy of supervision requires a 50-55:1 ratio of offenders to agent. This enables agents to take a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the needs of offenders including any substance abuse issues. PCS emphasizes the importance of cultivating and developing partnerships and collaborations with community organizations and service providers to ensure offender access and referral to a continuous body of resources as they reintegrate into community life in a law-abiding manner. The Division has partnerships in every region of the state that provide substance abuse services to the offenders under the Division's supervision and there are ongoing efforts to create new partnerships and to collaborate on emerging community initiatives that serve DPP's offender population. Division employees serve on all of the local drug and alcohol councils. There is a concerted effort to increase the identification of community partners in order to expand access to substance abuse services. Offices operating under the PCS strategy realign their resources as necessary to expand capacity and maximize offenders' access to these community services. Additionally, DPP has expanded the ability of staff to increase drug testing in all of our offices as a means to hold offenders accountable for their actions, identify substance abusers, and assist in offender supervision.

The department should be prepared to comment on whether or not the new Offender Case Management System will allow them to track recidivism rates by programs. DLS recommends that the system include the ability to track recidivism rates by program and that this information be included in future Managing for Results submissions once it is available.

Recidivism is generally defined as the return to the custody or supervision of the Department three years after leaving the custody or supervision of the Department. No case management system in the country tracks recidivism rates. Data in case management systems is limited to information related to events that occur during the offender's supervision period. Most often, data from the case management system is downloaded to a statistical program along with data from other sources in order to determine recidivism rates. The Division agrees that a new Offender Case Management System should have the capability to track benchmarks and other specific measures with the potential to indicate the effectiveness of supervision practices and strategies.

Tracking offenders' progress by program is complicated by the mobility of the supervised population, especially in the large urban and suburban areas in Maryland. An offender, who lives in a CSAFE or PCS area today, may move to a non-CSAFE or PCS area tomorrow. This is also true for drug court participants and offenders supervised in other specialized caseloads. Tracking these discreet populations would challenge any case management system and would require more sophisticated evaluation and analysis to ensure program participants actually received an adequate "dose" while enrolled.

The department should be prepared to discuss agent caseloads and how those caseloads compare to nationally recommended caseload levels. The department should further be prepared to discuss future plans for caseload management – be it hiring of more agents, the implementation of new technology, or some other strategy.

Average caseload sizes are compiled and reviewed each month by the Division's Leadership Team with focus on the regional and office level. Likewise, each month unit supervisors review caseload sizes on an agent/monitor level. These figures are also shared with Secretary Saar and Deputy Secretary Livers each month. The following are the statewide averages as of December 31, 2005:

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Despite DPP's best managerial efforts there are some fluctuations in these averages that are generally due to extended sick leave, retirements, resignations and holding positions vacant in order to reach the budgeted turnover rate.

In response to the 2000 Joint Chairmen's Report, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services presented to the Budget Committees in October 2000, the Division's detailed plan for reinventing criminal supervision. In the preparation of that report, DPP appointed a Workload Analysis Implementation Council and worked with a nationally recognized community corrections consultant funded by the Office of Justice Programs to identify effective supervision practices and appropriate caseload size. Based on research, it was determined the appropriate agent to offender ratio should be 1:50-55 for high-risk offenders and 1:200 for low-risk offenders.

DPP's current efforts are focused on identifying low-risk offenders at the earliest possible point in the supervision process and moving them to larger caseloads that require minimal interaction with the supervising agent. This will enable agents to focus more attention on high-risk offenders.

The University of Maryland's Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) and the Virginia Commonwealth University recently provided DPP with preliminary findings from their evaluation of the Proactive Community Supervision strategy. These findings show a reduction in the number of warrants issued for violating the conditions of supervision and a significant decrease in new arrests for the PCS participants. Armed with data that validates the PCS strategy, the Division will prepare an expansion plan for FY 2008 and submit its plan to Secretary Saar.

Fiscal 2006 Actions:

Personnel: The department should be prepared to discuss the impact of the PIN reduction on DPP operations.

DPP is committed to managing its resources to cover the fundamental operations of the Division and provide intensive supervision to high-risk/high-needs offenders. The Division does not control who is placed under its supervision. The number of offenders reporting for intake is determined by the District and Circuit Courts, the Maryland Parole Commission and mandatory releases from the Division of Correction. Consequently, DPP is constantly looking for new ways to maximize the impact of its limited supervision resources in order to reach its goal of safer Maryland communities. In this effort, DPP is constantly examining existing research on the subject and exploring new approaches for assessing risk and placing offenders in the appropriate level of supervision.

DPP management has responded to high caseloads by seeking alternatives for managing lower risk offenders that will enable us to concentrate the bulk of our resources on high-risk offenders. We have been exploring the efficacy of a kiosk caseload and various forms of administrative caseloads in order to identify the cohort of supervisees with whom we could safely have less interaction. We recognize that a parolee or probationer may be supervised today for a minor drug offense, but may have a lengthy and serious criminal record. It would unreasonably jeopardize public safety to conclude that this person should not be supervised at all or should be assigned to a large

caseload without review. We are developing a process wherein shortly after intake a professional judgment will determine to what level of supervision each offender should be assigned.

ISSUES:

1. Collection Rate for Division of Parole and Probation Fees

Probation Fees: The department should be prepared to present an updated estimate of how much revenue the increase in the supervision fee will generate, based on the collection rate determined by OLA.

As the analyst noted, the Division based the estimated 50% collection rate on the number of offenders ordered to pay the monthly supervision fee and what the estimated collections should be, compared to what was actually collected. The Division used both open and closed cases in estimating its collection rate. The Division's data reflected that supervision fees were imposed in 36.4% of active criminal supervision probation cases. Approximately 40,000 individuals are sentenced to probation supervision annually so 14,560 new probation cases will be assessed the increased supervision fee. Accordingly, the Division estimated revenues of \$709,635 in FY 2006 and \$1.3 million in FY 2007.

The Office of Legislative Audits (OLA) determined that based on closed case data, the collection rate for probationers is 33.5%. Consequently, the Division would estimate an increase of \$475,455 over the actual FY 2005 collections that totaled \$6,479,304.

DPP should be prepared to discuss its plans regarding the reevaluation of its estimation methodology.

While DPP agreed to adopt the OLA's estimation methodology, supervision fee collections through January 2006 totaling \$2,353,848 are less than the anticipated increases.

The Division's information system is not capable of producing reports that allow the Division to accurately reflect collection activity especially in light of the requirements for the order in which funds are disbursed. The impediments to obtaining the desired data stem from a number of factors, some of which are due to the age and lack of sophistication of OBSCIS and others are due to related business practices. The OBSCIS system is over 20 years old and was not originally intended or designed as a billing and accounts receivable system. When an offender is placed under the Division's supervision, a monthly payment plan is established based on the total amount of money the offender owes and the length of the offender's supervision period. Disbursements of monies collected from offenders are made in a specific priority order according to former Chief Judge Murphy's guidelines, with all restitution being paid to victims before the other categories are credited with funds, unless otherwise ordered by the court. Each of the succeeding priorities is paid off completely before proceeding to the next priority. As a result, OBSCIS cannot report an offender's compliance with payments by specific category. Although the offender is charged a

supervision fee for each month and the offender is paying in accordance with the payment plan, there may not be any money disbursed to the General Fund for the supervision fee if higher priority debts are owed. Because disbursements are processed separately from collections and collections are based on a payment plan while disbursements are based on a priority schedule, it is not possible to determine the time when the supervision fee was due versus the time when the funds were disbursed to pay that fee.

A comprehensive billing and accounts receivable system would be needed in order for the Division to generate reports that reflect actual collection rates overall and by category. Holding offenders accountable to victims of crime and the community is an integral part of the Division's supervision model. The ability to accurately measure collection rates for monies offenders are ordered to pay as a part of their sentences would enable to Division to more fully realize this goal. Developing this system entails:

- Defining what data needs to be captured;
- Analysis of DPP business requirements to ensure that both supervision and collections data are part of a unified, user-friendly, case management system that will interface with essential business partners including the Central Collection Unit of Department of Budget of Management;
- Analysis of the accounting functions that must be incorporated in the program;
- Implement the technical solution along with appropriate changes in business practices.

The Division disburses in excess of \$16 million annually and fully recognizes the importance of being able to measure and report whether this is the optimum outcome. The Division welcomes continued assistance from the Office of Legislative Audits and any recommendations it may have to improve and accurately reflect its collection activity.

DLS recommends that DPP study and evaluate its information technology needs as they pertain to both supervision and collections data and report to the committees at the conclusion of its evaluation.

The Division wholeheartedly concurs with this recommendation and has in fact already begun taking steps toward implementing it. While DPP does not control the acquisition of programs and systems to meet its technological needs, we do work in concert with the Department's Information, Technology and Communication Division (ITCD) to explore how new technologies may be utilized to increase overall efficiency. We recently completed a joint project to develop an on-line reporting system that allows agents and monitors to prepare reports using a template that pulls specified data elements from OBSCIS II to avoid having to type them. The agent/monitor can then forward the report electronically to a supervisor for review, comments and approval. Reports prepared for the Maryland Parole Commission are electronically forwarded to them thus eliminating the time and cost it used to take to mail the report.

We are currently developing business needs for some additional technological enhancements using the same platform that will serve as a bridge until the Department is able to roll out a new information system. DPP is involved in the selection process for the new system. We have attended all demonstrations arranged by ITCD and we have given and will continue to make our needs known as the selection process continues. Having the

ability to better track data, especially collections data is a top priority for DPP that we continue to voice to ITCD. While we will be happy to report the results, we would prefer to simply join with ITCD when they present the new system for the Department that will not only meet the needs mentioned here, but also bring down some of the barriers to information sharing between agencies within the Department.

2. Drinking Driver Monitor Program Fees

The department should be prepared to comment on DDMP program fee collections year-to-date and should provide an estimate for total fee revenues for fiscal 2006.

As of January 2006, DDMP program fee revenues total \$3,809.660. Based on this collection rate, the Division estimates revenues totaling \$6,753,660.49 in FY 2006. This estimate represents a revenue shortfall of \$1.5 million. The Division indicated in our testimony last year that we would submit a deficiency request in the event that revenues fell short of the projected amount. This request has been submitted.

Recommended Actions

1. Delete grant for Baltimore Re-entry Employment Center.

The Baltimore City Re-entry Center (ReC) opened at the Northwest Career Center, located at Mondawmin Mall on July 1, 2005. This center is an innovative pilot program that provides comprehensive services, essential to offender re-entry under one roof. Services provided at the ReC or through its referral network include linkages to housing, securing state issued identification cards, assistance with addressing child support arrearages, occupational skills training, education (both pre-GED and GED services), and job placement. The Division of Parole and Probation, which has a field office located next to the ReC, has detailed its one of its Community Service Coordinators to the ReC to link both parolees and probationers to the various services, including job placement, provided at the center. The innovative service delivery model seeks to address those barriers that prevent offenders from connecting to the workforce – becoming employed, supporting themselves, and contributing to Maryland's economy. Research has demonstrated that a connection to employment is a protective factor linked to reductions in recidivism.

While the ReC provides services to any offender in need, there is a case management component provided to those offenders identified as high risk, returning to target northwest Baltimore communities, and receiving intensive community supervision services from the Division of Parole and Probation. The case management component is unique as the case managers assist the offenders with navigating the re-entry process and working in concert with DPP staff to not only enhance public safety via compliance with formal conditions of release, but also to ensure the offenders receive the services needed in order to make their transition from prison to the community both a positive and effective one.

To date, the ReC has provided services ranging from referrals to job placement assistance to over 1,700 offenders with 300 receiving the case management component. The ReC has support from a number of agencies and organizations. Its Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from a number of agencies, including the Department of Public Safety, the Circuit Court of Baltimore City, the Baltimore Police Department, and several non-profit and community-based organizations. The ReC is currently funded in large part by a

grant from the Abell Foundation (\$500,000), a federal earmark arranged by Senator Barbara Mikulski (\$135,000), a U.S. Department of Labor grant (\$500,000, with 75% provided to community and faith-based organizations to complementary services), and an appropriation from the City of Baltimore (\$250,000).

The funds from the Abell Foundation, which support the bulk of the ReC's activities, will expire in July 2006. The funds, allocated by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services budget, will provide a much-needed mechanism of aftercare for an additional 1,500 offenders in FY 2007. Without these funds, an innovative approach to linking offenders to the workforce will cease to exist. We ask that you reject the analyst's recommendation that funding for the ReC be eliminated.

2. Delete three new positions and associated funds.

There are 51 CSAFE communities in Maryland and DPP has assigned 76 agents to those sites. In addition to their regular duties, agents assigned to CSAFE sites regularly attend HEAT (Heightened Enforcement Accountability and Treatment) Team meetings, NST (Neighborhood Safety Team) meetings, and neighborhood association meetings. Agents are also responsible for entering field notes and photographs of offenders into HATS and electronically referring those cases to the CSAFE team. Agents take part in case presentations, case staffings, and action planning with the CSAFE team, participate in joint home visits, and maintain adult offender ID books. Key indicator reports and warrant tracking forms are submitted monthly along with minutes of team meetings.

As of February 1, 2006, these agents were assigned 5,170 active cases (average of 68 cases per agent) and 8,792 total cases (average 116 cases per agent). Eighteen of the seventy-six agents had active cases outside of the CSAFE site in addition to their CSAFE cases. Deleting these three positions and the associated funds will negatively impact the Division's ability to assign agents to new CSAFE communities.

3. Adopt committee narrative directing the Division of Parole and Probation to evaluate and report on their information technology needs in reference to case management and fee collection tracking.

The Division fully supports the recommendation to evaluate and report our information technology needs in reference to case management and fee collection tracking. We believe that this can best be accomplished with the expert guidance of the OLA. Having the Department's Information Technology and Communication Division interpret DPP's programmatic needs, identify necessary system elements and incorporate OLA recommendations in the plan will ensure that the end product meets operational and fiscal requirements.

Audit Findings:

Finding 2: Reconciliation of cash balances to the State Comptroller's records were not reviewed and approved by supervisory personnel, and an unreconciled difference of approximately \$585,000 has gone unresolved since June 2002.

As the Division advised last year, it requested permission from the Office of the Secretary's Division of Financial Services to eliminate the unreconciled cash balance prior to

the end of the audit period. During the FY 2004 year-end closing, this unreconciled difference was eliminated by a journal entry that reverted the funds to the General Fund.

The Division's primary mission is to make Maryland communities safer places to live and work. The Division appreciates your consideration in ensuring that the Division safeguards its staff as they perform their duties in support of the Division's mission.

I trust this information adequately addresses the issues that were raised by the analyst. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Judith Sachwald Director

cc: Mary Ann Saar, Secretary, DPSCS
Mary L. Livers, PhD., Deputy Secretary, DPSCS
G. Lawrence Franklin, Deputy Secretary, DPSCS
Robert Berkey, Analyst, DBM
Keri Beth Cain, Analyst, DLS
Edward Cheston, Staff, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Rhea L. Harris, Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, DPSCS
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The Honorable Joan Cadden Chair, House Subcommittee on Public Safety and Administration Room 410B, Lowe House Office Building Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

RE: <u>Division of Parole and Probation – Operating Budget Analysis</u>

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ISSUES:

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- Analysis of the accounting functions that must be incorporated in the program;
- Implement the technical solution along with appropriate changes in business practices.

The Division disburses in excess of \$16 million annually and fully recognizes the importance of being able to measure and report whether this is the optimum outcome. The Division welcomes continued assistance from the Office of Legislative Audits and any recommendations it may have to improve and accurately reflect its collection activity.

DLS recommends that DPP study and evaluate its information technology needs as they pertain to both supervision and collections data and report to the committees at the conclusion of its evaluation.

The Division wholeheartedly concurs with this recommendation and has in fact already begun taking steps toward implementing it. While DPP does not control the acquisition of programs and systems to meet its technological needs, we do work in concert with the Department's Information, Technology and Communication Division (ITCD) to explore how new technologies may be utilized to increase overall efficiency. We recently completed a joint project to develop an on-line reporting system that allows agents and monitors to prepare reports using a template that pulls specified data elements from OBSCIS II to avoid having to type them. The agent/monitor can then forward the report electronically to a supervisor for review, comments and approval. Reports prepared for the Maryland Parole Commission are electronically forwarded to them thus eliminating the time and cost it used to take to mail the report.

We are currently developing business needs for some additional technological enhancements using the same platform that will serve as a bridge until the Department is able to roll out a new information system. DPP is involved in the selection process for the new system. We have attended all demonstrations arranged by ITCD and we have given and will continue to make our needs known as the selection process continues. Having the

ability to better track data, especially collections data is a top priority for DPP that we continue to voice to ITCD. While we will be happy to report the results, we would prefer to simply join with ITCD when they present the new system for the Department that will not only meet the needs mentioned here, but also bring down some of the barriers to information sharing between agencies within the Department.

2. Drinking Driver Monitor Program Fees

The department should be prepared to comment on DDMP program fee collections year-to-date and should provide an estimate for total fee revenues for fiscal 2006.

As of January 2006, DDMP program fee revenues total \$3,809.660. Based on this collection rate, the Division estimates revenues totaling \$6,753,660.49 in FY 2006. This estimate represents a revenue shortfall of \$1.5 million. The Division indicated in our testimony last year that we would submit a deficiency request in the event that revenues fell short of the projected amount. This request has been submitted.

Recommended Actions

1. Delete grant for Baltimore Re-entry Employment Center.

The Baltimore City Re-entry Center (ReC) opened at the Northwest Career Center, located at Mondawmin Mall on July 1, 2005. This center is an innovative pilot program that provides comprehensive services, essential to offender re-entry under one roof. Services provided at the ReC or through its referral network include linkages to housing, securing state issued identification cards, assistance with addressing child support arrearages, occupational skills training, education (both pre-GED and GED services), and job placement. The Division of Parole and Probation, which has a field office located next to the ReC, has detailed its one of its Community Service Coordinators to the ReC to link both parolees and probationers to the various services, including job placement, provided at the center. The innovative service delivery model seeks to address those barriers that prevent offenders from connecting to the workforce – becoming employed, supporting themselves, and contributing to Maryland's economy. Research has demonstrated that a connection to employment is a protective factor linked to reductions in recidivism.

While the ReC provides services to any offender in need, there is a case management component provided to those offenders identified as high risk, returning to target northwest Baltimore communities, and receiving intensive community supervision services from the Division of Parole and Probation. The case management component is unique as the case managers assist the offenders with navigating the re-entry process and working in concert with DPP staff to not only enhance public safety via compliance with formal conditions of release, but also to ensure the offenders receive the services needed in order to make their transition from prison to the community both a positive and effective one.

To date, the ReC has provided services ranging from referrals to job placement assistance to over 1,700 offenders with 300 receiving the case management component. The ReC has support from a number of agencies and organizations. Its Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from a number of agencies, including the Department of Public Safety, the Circuit Court of Baltimore City, the Baltimore Police Department, and several non-profit and community-based organizations. The ReC is currently funded in large part by a

grant from the Abell Foundation (\$500,000), a federal earmark arranged by Senator Barbara Mikulski (\$135,000), a U.S. Department of Labor grant (\$500,000, with 75% provided to community and faith-based organizations to complementary services), and an appropriation from the City of Baltimore (\$250,000).

The funds from the Abell Foundation, which support the bulk of the ReC's activities, will expire in July 2006. The funds, allocated by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services budget, will provide a much-needed mechanism of aftercare for an additional 1,500 offenders in FY 2007. Without these funds, an innovative approach to linking offenders to the workforce will cease to exist. We ask that you reject the analyst's recommendation that funding for the ReC be eliminated.

2. Delete three new positions and associated funds.

There are 51 CSAFE communities in Maryland and DPP has assigned 76 agents to those sites. In addition to their regular duties, agents assigned to CSAFE sites regularly attend HEAT (Heightened Enforcement Accountability and Treatment) Team meetings, NST (Neighborhood Safety Team) meetings, and neighborhood association meetings. Agents are also responsible for entering field notes and photographs of offenders into HATS and electronically referring those cases to the CSAFE team. Agents take part in case presentations, case staffings, and action planning with the CSAFE team, participate in joint home visits, and maintain adult offender ID books. Key indicator reports and warrant tracking forms are submitted monthly along with minutes of team meetings.

As of February 1, 2006, these agents were assigned 5,170 active cases (average of 68 cases per agent) and 8,792 total cases (average 116 cases per agent). Eighteen of the seventy-six agents had active cases outside of the CSAFE site in addition to their CSAFE cases. Deleting these three positions and the associated funds will negatively impact the Division's ability to assign agents to new CSAFE communities.

3. Adopt committee narrative directing the Division of Parole and Probation to evaluate and report on their information technology needs in reference to case management and fee collection tracking.

The Division fully supports the recommendation to evaluate and report our information technology needs in reference to case management and fee collection tracking. We believe that this can best be accomplished with the expert guidance of the OLA. Having the Department's Information Technology and Communication Division interpret DPP's programmatic needs, identify necessary system elements and incorporate OLA recommendations in the plan will ensure that the end product meets operational and fiscal requirements.

Audit Findings:

Finding 2: Reconciliation of cash balances to the State Comptroller's records were not reviewed and approved by supervisory personnel, and an unreconciled difference of approximately \$585,000 has gone unresolved since June 2002.

As the Division advised last year, it requested permission from the Office of the Secretary's Division of Financial Services to eliminate the unreconciled cash balance prior to

the end of the audit period. During the FY 2004 year-end closing, this unreconciled difference was eliminated by a journal entry that reverted the funds to the General Fund.

The Division's primary mission is to make Maryland communities safer places to live and work. The Division appreciates your consideration in ensuring that the Division safeguards its staff as they perform their duties in support of the Division's mission.

I trust this information adequately addresses the issues that were raised by the analyst. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Judith Sachwald Director

cc: Mary Ann Saar, Secretary, DPSCS
Mary L. Livers, Ph.D., Deputy Secretary, DPSCS
G. Lawrence Franklin, Deputy Secretary, DPSCS
Robert Berkey, Analyst, DBM
Keri Beth Cain, Analyst, DLS
Elizabeth H. Moss, Staff, House Committee on Appropriations
Rhea L. Harris, Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, DPSCS
Susan Dooley, Director of Financial Services, DPSCS